



Montgomery County, Virginia

AGRICULTURAL (A-1)

A-1 District: Agricultural (A-1) district preserves and enhances the low-density character and the natural resources of the rural areas of the county where agriculture, forests, and open space uses predominate. Residential development is allowed under the guidelines and density established by the sliding scale.

Lands qualifying for inclusion in the Agricultural (A-1) district shall be within areas mapped as rural or resource stewardship in the Comprehensive Plan. The A-1 zoning areas are not served by public water and sewer and are not in close proximity to other public services. The minimum area required to create an A-1 district is ten (10) acres of contiguous land.

What can I do by right in an A-1 district?

There are uses that are designated as "by right" which means you do not have to apply for a special use permit. The uses do, however, have to comply with all approved plans and permits, development standards, and performance standards included in the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance and with all other applicable regulations. The "by right" uses include:

- Agriculture
- Agriculture, intensive
- Agriculture, small-scale
- Bed & Breakfast, Homestay
- Cemetery
- Church
- Dwelling, Single Family
- Farm Enterprise
- Fire/police/rescue squad station
- Home Occupation
- Manufactured (mobile) home, Class A and B
- Natural Area
- Park, unlighted
- Playground, unlighted
- Pet, Farm
- Pet, Household
- Public Utility line, water & sewer
- Sawmill, Temporary
- School
- Telecommunication towers, attached
- Veterinary practice, animal hospital

What uses require a Special Use Permit?

Some uses are allowed in the A-1 district with the permission of the Board of Supervisors through the Special Use Permit process (applications available from the Planning Dept.). These include:

- Bed & Breakfast Inn
- Boarding House
- Campground
- Camp, Boarding
- Civic Club
- Contractor's Storage Yard
- Country Club
- Country Inn
- Custom Meat cutting, processing & sales
- Day Care Center
- Disposal Facility, Landfill
- Exploratory activities associated with extractive industry
- Extractive industry & accessory uses, including, but not limited to, the mining of minerals, operation of oil and gas wells
- Flea Market
- Game Preserve
- Garden Center
- General store or specialty shop, provided gross floor area is 2,000 sq. ft or less
- Golf Course / Driving Range
- Grain Mill, Feed Mill
- Home Business
- Junkyard, automobile graveyard
- Kennel, commercial*
- Livestock Market
- Park, lighted
- Playground, lighted
- Public utility plant, other, substation, or water or sewer (not including distribution or collection lines)
- Recreational Vehicle Park
- Recycling Collection Point
- Repair shop, automotive* (with special standards)
- Restaurant (gross floor area 2,000 sq. feet or less)
- Rural Resort
- Sawmill
- Shooting Range*
- Slaughterhouse
- Solid Waste Collection Point
- Stable, Commercial
- Stone Engraving and Sales
- Structure, non-Residential, over 20,000 gross sq. ft
- Structure, 40+ feet height
- Telecommunications Tower, freestanding
- Transition House

*Special use restrictions apply to automotive repair shops, kennels, and shooting ranges.

In addition, a Special Use Permit (SUP) is required from the Board of Zoning Appeals for the following:

- Accessory Structures greater than 1,200 sq. ft. in area and/or 18 ft. in height
- Farm Enterprise with less than 40 ft. of public road frontage

Building & Lot Requirements

Each zoning district has different lot and building requirements; which are meant to insure the compatibility of new development with the existing development in the surrounding area.

Minimum Lot Size

1 Acre

Lot Access

Lots must be accessible from a VDOT road or from a hard-surface road designed by a professional engineer to meet current VDOT subdivision street requirements. There are two exceptions:

- 1) One (1) lot divided from a parent parcel may be served by a private access easement at least forty (40) feet in width and connected to a road in the VDOT system,
- 2) A lot in a family subdivision may use a twenty (20) ft. easement to connect the lot to a road currently in the VDOT system.

Maximum Coverage

No more than twenty percent (20%) of lot may be covered by buildings and no more than thirty percent (30%) of any lot shall be covered by impervious surfaces.

Minimum Width

120 feet at the minimum setback line of the front yard. Frontage requirements for family subdivisions and public utilities or public water and sewer installation lots shall be in accord with the Montgomery County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance.

Maximum Length/Width Ratio

Five to one (5:1) for any lot less than 20 acres in area.

Minimum Yards

Front: 40 feet (also refer to additional setback requirements pertaining to residential uses near intensive agricultural operations)

Side: 15 feet for each principal structure

Rear: 40 feet

Accessory Buildings: Forty (40) ft. in front yard, ten (10) ft. to a side or rear lot line.

(Setbacks shall be measured from property lines, not the edge of pavement.)

Maximum Building Height

No building or structure, except for exempted structures provided for in Section 10-2(5)(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, shall exceed 40 feet in height, as defined, except by Special Use Permit and that for every 1 foot above 40 feet, the building or structure shall be set back an additional 2 feet up to a maximum of 100 feet.

Introducing the Sliding Scale

Sliding Scale is one method the County uses to decrease the density of development in the Agricultural (A-1) and Conservation (C-1) Districts.

The maximum gross density is the maximum number of lots one can create by subdividing a parent parcel. Each parcel in the county which existed when the current zoning ordinance was approved (12/13/1999) is considered a parent parcel.

In the Agricultural (A-1) District, the maximum number of lots one can create is determined by the amount of land in each parent parcel (see table below). For example, if you have between 3.0 to 10.0 acres of land, you can subdivide that land into three lots. A lot must be at least one (1) acre in size. So, if your parent parcel is only 2.3 acres, you will only be able to create two lots.

How you subdivide your parent parcel depends on the size of lots you want to create, on the number of lot assignments you want to assign to each lot, and on the availability of an onsite water supply and adequate wastewater treatment (which may further limit the number of lots).

Lots which have been created from a parent parcel cannot be further subdivided unless more than one lot assignment was given to the parcel during the initial subdivision of the property.

Permissible Density: Sliding Scale	
Size of Parent Parcel	Number of Permitted Lots
Less than 1 acre	0 lots
Less than 2 acres	1 lot
Less than 3 acres	Up to 2 lots
3.0 to 10.0 acres	Up to 3 lots
10.01 to 30.0 acres	Up to 4 lots
30.01 to 50.0 acres	Up to 5 lots
50.01 to 70.0 acres	Up to 6 lots
70.01 to 90.0 acres	Up to 7 lots
90.01 to 110.0 acres	Up to 8 lots
110.01 to 130.0 acres	Up to 9 lots
More than 130.01 acres	Add 1 lot per additional 20 acres

For additional information contact:
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Christiansburg, VA 24073
Phone: 540-394-2148 Fax: 540-381-8897
www.Montgomerycountyva.gov/planning

This sheet is intended to only be a guide for development regulations in this zoning district. Please see Chapter 10 of the Montgomery County Code for the specific regulations. The full texts of the zoning and subdivision ordinances are available at www.montgomerycountyva.gov/planning or at www.municode.com.